

X.—*Obituary.*

JOEL ASAPH ALLEN.

WE regret to learn of the death of Dr. J. A. Allen, Dean of the Scientific Staff of the American Museum of Natural History, which occurred at Cornwall on Hudson, New York State, on 29 August, 1921, when he had reached the age of eighty-three years.

Dr. Allen was born at Springfield, Massachusetts, in 1838. His father, Joel Allen, was a farmer of old New England stock, and his upbringing was rigid and puritanical. He was educated at local schools and had no special advantages, and it was not until he came under the influence of Louis Agassiz in 1862 that his taste and craving for natural history were able to get full vent. He accompanied Agassiz to Brazil in 1865, and in subsequent years he made several exploring and collecting expeditions to the then wild and unknown portions of the western and southern States. In 1872 he became Assistant in Ornithology in the Museum of Comparative Zoölogy at Cambridge. This position he retained until 1885, when he was appointed Curator of Birds and Mammals in the American Museum of Natural History at New York. Of late years his interests and writings have been almost entirely concerned with Mammals, but his output of ornithological work was very considerable, and the number of ornithological papers recorded in a special volume of autobiography and bibliography published in 1917 by the American Museum amounted to 970.

Among his earlier more important papers is that on the Mammals and winter Birds of eastern Florida (1871), which won him the Humboldt Scholarship and became a classic, and that on the collection of Brazilian birds collected by the H. H. Smith Expedition, 1891-92.

To Dr. Allen is largely due the accuracy and high standard of literary form shown by the pages of the 'Auk,' of which he was the editor for its first 28 years, from 1883 to 1912, and also of its predecessor the 'Bulletin of the Nuttall

Ornithological Club,' as well as the three editions of the A. O. U. Checklist. He also edited twenty-two volumes of the 'Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History,' and several of the Memoirs of the same Institution.

Mr. Allen was a Founder Fellow of the American Ornithologists' Union and President for the first seven years of its existence (1883-1891). He was elected a Foreign Member of the B. O. U. in 1890 and an Honorary Member in 1907, and was the recipient of many other honours and distinctions.

Personally Mr. Allen was of a most shy and retiring nature. He never appeared on the lecture platform and seldom or ever spoke or attended the meetings of scientific societies, but he was a most kind and sympathetic colleague and much beloved and respected by all his fellow-workers and pupils. At the meeting of the A. O. U. at Philadelphia in November last a memorial address was delivered by his former assistant and associate, Dr. Frank M. Chapman, and will doubtless duly appear in the pages of our contemporary.

In addition to this, a special volume was published by the American Museum in 1916, entitled 'Autobiographical notes and a Bibliography of the Scientific Publications of Joel Asaph Allen,' containing full particulars of his activities, with an excellent portrait. It is from this work that most of the facts here recorded have been obtained.

SERGIUS NIKOLAEVICH ALPHÉRAKI.

The news of the death of Mr. Alphéraki, of Petrograd, which took place in 1918, was briefly mentioned in the last number of 'The Ibis.'

Born in 1850, Alphéraki was primarily an entomologist, and published a number of papers chiefly on Lepidoptera. To ornithologists he is best known as the author of a monograph of the Ducks ('*Utki Rossii*') and the Geese ('*Gusi Rossii*') of his native land. The latter volume was translated into English by John Marshall, and published by Rowland Ward in 1905 with a frontispiece by Dr. P. P. Sushkin and

twenty-four plates by F. W. Frohawk. It was reviewed in 'The Ibis' (1905, p. 478), and Count Salvadori also contributed some critical remarks on the work (Ibis, 1905, pp. 528-535) which were answered by the author himself in the following year (Ibis, 1906, pp. 389-394).

Mr. Alphéraki was elected a Foreign Member of the Union in 1909 and a Corresponding Fellow of the A. O. U. in 1913. He was also a corresponding member of the Imperial Academy of Sciences at Petrograd and a member of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society.

We are indebted to the 'Auk' for most of the facts in this notice.

VALENTIN LvOVICH BIANCHI.

As was stated in the October number of 'The Ibis,' the death of Dr. Bianchi, which occurred at Petrograd on 10 January, 1920, was apparently accelerated by the privations he had suffered. He was born in 1857, and was for many years the Curator of the Ornithological Department of the Zoological Museum of the Imperial Academy of Sciences.

Dr. Bianchi's work was almost entirely devoted to the Palearctic Avifauna, and he published a large number of papers, mostly in Russian, though a few appeared in German, in the 'Annals of the Zoological Museum of the Imperial Academy.' One of his earliest papers deals with the birds of the western Pamirs, which were explored by the well-known Russian traveller, Grum Grzimaïlo, in 1884. In 1884-7, Bianchi appears to have himself been in Kansu in western China with Berezowski, and the two travellers prepared a memoir on the birds of that district in 1891, and during the following years many papers came from his prolific pen dealing with the birds of various portions of the Russian Empire. His last contributions which reached this country will be found listed in the 'Zoological Record' for 1916.

Dr. Bianchi was in England in 1905 in order to attend the meeting of the International Ornithological Congress, and

was present at a meeting of the B. O. C. in July, when he spoke on the Dippers, describing a new species, and exhibited the eggs of the Knot. He was elected a Foreign Member of the Union in 1900 and a Honorary Member in 1914.

WILLIAM SPIERS BRUCE.

By the death of Dr. Bruce, on the 29th of October last year, a remarkable personality has been removed from the ranks of the British Ornithologists' Union. Though his life was mainly devoted to Antarctic and Arctic exploration, yet zoological investigations in those regions had always a very prominent place in his activities; and to both he made contributions of a very important nature. The former brought him many honours, among others the LL.D. of the University of Aberdeen and the Gold Medals of the Royal and Scottish Geographical Societies, and the Livingstone Medal of the American Geographical Society. Dr. Bruce, who was an intimate friend of the writer, was elected a Member of the B. O. U. in 1900, and its aims were always borne in mind. As a member of the Jackson-Harmsworth Expedition to Franz Josef Land in 1896-7, he added the Lapp Bunting, Shore-Lark, Turnstone, and the Purple and Bonaparte's Sandpipers to the avifauna of that Archipelago (*Ibis*, 1898, pp. 249-277). At Spitsbergen in 1896 he found the first chicks of the Sanderling, which afforded, in addition, the first definite information of the breeding of that bird in Europe. In 1898 he added the Grey Phalarope to the avifauna of Novaia Zemlya. In 1892 he sailed for the far south as the leader of the Scottish Antarctic Expedition. The expedition wintered, and some of its members spent the Antarctic summer of 1893-4 at the South Orkneys, where the great and most valuable collections of birds and their eggs (some of the latter being previously unknown) were obtained and subsequently fully described in 'The Ibis' for 1896 (pp. 145-187, pls. iii.-xiii.). The deep-sea and other marine investigations added over 150 species new to science; and the geographical explorations included the discovery of Coates Land—probably a part of the Antarctic

Continent. On the return voyage he visited Gough Island, never before visited by a naturalist, where he obtained, among other treasures, a new Finch (*Nesospiza goughensis*) and an Albatross which is still an ornithological conundrum.

Dr. Bruce's entire collections, comprising thousands of zoological and geological specimens, were presented by him to the Royal Scottish Museum in 1921, and are a lasting monument of his unbounded enthusiasm, and indomitable perseverance under circumstances that would have deterred the vast majority of mankind.

Dr. Bruce died in his fifty-fifth year after a long and distressing illness. His undying affection for the Antarctic is made singularly manifest by his request that he be cremated and his ashes cast on the waters of the South Atlantic, preferably about 10 degrees south and 15 degrees east, a request which will be duly carried out.

WILLIAM EAGLE CLARKE.

CHARLES BARNEY CORY.

We have to record the death on 29 July, 1921, in his 65th year, of Mr. C. B. Cory, for some years the Curator of Birds in the Field Museum at Chicago.

Mr. Cory was born in Boston, Mass., in 1857 and was the son of Barney Cory. He was educated at Boston and in the St. Lawrence Scientific School of Harvard University, and subsequently went into business in Boston. In 1894 he sold his collections to the Field Museum in Chicago and became Curator of the Department of Ornithology there, a position which he continued to hold until his death.

In his early days Mr. Cory was much interested in West Indian Bird-life; he amassed large collections and visited many of the islands himself, besides employing collectors. The results of his observations and researches appeared in several volumes, the first of which, 'Birds of the Bahama Islands,' appeared in 1880; this was followed by the 'Birds of Haiti and San Domingo,' 1884, and 'A List of the Birds of the West Indies,' which was first published in 1885 and was reissued under a slightly

different title in 1889 and 1892. He also published a large and expensive work in "elephant folio" on the 'Beautiful and Curious Birds of the World.'

After his appointment at Chicago he prepared a work on the 'Birds of Illinois and Wisconsin' and a new edition of his 'Key to the Birds of Eastern North America,' both intended to aid the beginner in identifying his specimens.

Of late years the Field Museum has acquired a good deal of South American material, and Mr. Cory's last work was the preparation of a 'Catalogue of Birds of the Americas,' of which, however, only two parts have as yet appeared (see *Ibis*, 1918, p. 500 and 1921, p. 156). We hope that the manuscript of the succeeding parts is sufficiently complete to allow them to be published.

Mr. Cory was a Founder Fellow of the American Ornithologists' Union and President from 1903 to 1905. He was elected a Foreign Member of our own Union only last year.

ALFRED GRANDIDIER.

From a recent number of 'Nature' we learn of the death of M. Alfred Grandidier on 13 September, 1921, at the age of eighty-four years.

Born in Paris in 1836, M. Grandidier began his travels at the early age of twenty, when he accompanied his elder brother to South America, where he spent several years exploring and collecting. In 1863 he started off for the East, intending to make a study of Buddhism in Ceylon and Tibet. Illness caused him to change his plans, and he proceeded to Zanzibar and thence to Madagascar, which thenceforward became the subject of his life-work. He paid two other visits—in 1866 and 1868—to that island, after which he settled down in Paris to publish the results of his labours. His great work 'L'Histoire politique, physique et naturelle de Madagascar' is still incomplete, some twenty-five volumes out of the forty planned having been issued. It is hoped that his son will continue and finish his work.

The volumes dealing with the birds are four in number—one of text and three of plates ; they were written by Prof. Alphonse Milne-Edwards and M. Grandidier in collaboration, and form a most complete account, splendidly illustrated, of the strange avifauna of that island. They were published at intervals between 1876 and 1885.

M. Grandidier was a member of the Academy of Sciences since 1885, was President of the Paris Geographical Society from 1901 to 1905, and received their Gold Medal in 1872. Only so recently as last July he was made Commander of the Legion of Honour.

JOHN MACOUN.

We regret that we have omitted to chronicle the death of Prof. John Macoun, who has been a Colonial Member of the Union since 1905. It occurred at Sidney, Vancouver Island, British Columbia, on 18 July, 1920, when he was a little over eighty-eight years old.

Professor Macoun was born near Belfast, Ireland, in 1832, and emigrated to Canada in 1850. For some years he taught school and was at one time professor of natural sciences at Albert College, Belleville, Ontario. In 1882 he was appointed naturalist to the Geological Survey of Canada and held that post until his death, though he had retired from active work in connection with the position some eight years previously and had settled in Vancouver Island.

Prof. Macoun, while best known as a botanist, was one of the old school of naturalists whose labours embraced the whole field of natural history for his province. During his many journeys, which embraced every part of the Dominion from the Yukon to Nova Scotia, he gathered great collections of animals and plants, now housed in the National Museum and the National Herbarium at Ottawa. His best-known work in Ornithology is his 'Catalogue of Canadian Birds' published in 1900-1904, and reviewed in 'The Ibis' (1901, p. 505 ; 1904, p. 157 ; 1905, p. 281). Of this a French translation was issued in 1916, but unfortunately without any additional information.

Prof. Macoun's eldest son, James M. Macoun, also a botanist and attached to the Geological Survey, predeceased him; his second son, Mr. W. T. Macoun, is the Dominion Horticulturist, and survives him.

XI.—*Notices of recent Ornithological Publications.*

Chapin on African Birds.

[Notes on a new Ox-pecker and other little-known Birds of the Congo. By James P. Chapin. Amer. Mus. Novit. no. 17, 1921, pp. 1-16.]

Among his Congo collections Mr. Chapin has found a new Oxpecker related to *Buphagus africanus*, but darker and smaller. He and his companion Mr. Lang came across it at Zambi on the lower Congo, where it was commonly seen about the domestic cattle. He names it *Buphagus langi* and illustrates the difference between the new and the two well-known species in a neat sketch. He further proposes the subgeneric term *Buphagoides* to distinguish the Red-billed species *B. erythrorhynchus*.

His next note is on a Sunbird, *Nectarinia congensis*, described by van Oort in 1910, and not apparently met with since except by himself. He obtained a good many examples along the middle Congo.

The affinities of *Neolestes* and *Nicator* are discussed in the third note. These genera have been always associated with the Laniidæ, though undoubtedly aberrant. Mr. Chapin without hesitation assigns the first to the Pycnonotidæ, while he finds *Nicator* stands somewhat apart with relations to the Shrikes, the Bulbuls, and especially to *Bleda*. The juvenile plumage of *Signodus*, to which another sketch is devoted, is very remarkable and most unlike that of the Shrikes, with which the genus is often associated. He states "as passerine families go the Prionopidæ seem to be well marked off from the true Shrikes, but the affinities to the two typical African genera of some other forms usually associated with them seem to me most questionable."